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LETTER DATED 13 JULY 1994 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF LEBANON TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to inform you that the Lebanese Government has decided to request the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which expires on 31 July 1994, for a further interim period of six months, on the basis of the provisions of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) of 19 March 1978, 501 (1982) of 25 February 1982, 508 (1982) of 5 June 1982, 509 (1982) of 6 June 1982 and of all other relevant resolutions and decisions of the Council.

The Government of Lebanon is pleased to report that, since the last renewal of UNIFIL, major positive developments have accelerated the national reconstruction and rehabilitation process. Prominent international construction companies have joined Lebanese firms in rebuilding downtown Beirut's new commercial centre and modernizing the national infrastructure, with emphasis on electricity, telecommunications, transportation, waterworks, schools and hospitals.

Furthermore, my Government is pleased to report that the command of UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities continue to coordinate in perfect harmony with the goal of deploying the Lebanese Army throughout the south of the country up to its internationally recognized boundaries.

However, in spite of these positive developments, Israel's occupation of the south and continued aggressions against Lebanon and it citizens remain the major obstacle to national recovery. Sustained violations of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity include the abduction to Israel of a Lebanese citizen from his home on 21 May 1994 in defiance of international law and basic human rights, and daily attacks on the south and interior of Lebanon. The bloodiest of these occurred on 2 June 1994 when the Israeli military pounded areas of the eastern Bekaa with cluster bombs, fragmentation bombs, napalm bombs and perforation bombs, killing 60 people and seriously wounding more than 100.

It is most regrettable that Israel, despite its participation in the ongoing Middle East peace process, launched at Madrid, continues to attack Lebanon by land, sea and air instead of resorting to confidence-building measures. A much-needed sign of goodwill on Israel's part, short of actual release, would be to allow the Red Cross to visit hundreds of innocent Lebanese citizens held for years in Israeli prisons and the notorious Al-Khiam concentration camp in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Despite the lack of any tangible process in the Lebanese-Israeli track of the peace negotiations, Lebanon remains wholly committed to the Middle East peace process and will continue in the bilateral negotiations in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 425 (1978). Lebanon agreed to participate in the Madrid Conference and the subsequent rounds of negotiations in Washington on the basis of resolution 425 (1978), as was confirmed by the letter of assurances dated 18 October 1991 from the Government of the United States of America, as co-sponsor of the Conference, to the Government of Lebanon. It was Lebanon's clear understanding that the Middle East peace process would provide the framework in which Israel would implement Council resolution 425 (1978).

In view of Israel's continued aggressions against Lebanon and their threat to the peace process, it must be underscored that the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) remains the only way to stop the violence in southern Lebanon. Towards this end, the Council could play a positive role in securing peace for the region by demonstrating the inviolability of its resolutions and undertaking long overdue measures to implement resolution 425 (1978). This would enable the Lebanese Government to establish law and order throughout the entire south of the country by extending its authority up to its internationally recognized boundaries.

In this context, UNIFIL represents the international community's commitment to Lebanon and to the restoration of its full sovereignty and territorial integrity. Its support and humanitarian assistance are vital to the civilian population, but cannot be a substitute for the fulfilment of its original mandate as stipulated in resolution 425 (1978). UNIFIL's role as an interim force is to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon and to assist the Government of Lebanon in re-establishing its legitimate and effective authority in the area, through its army and internal security forces.

The Government of Lebanon avails itself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the UNIFIL command, administrators, troops and troop-contributing countries for their noble efforts and sacrifices made in the cause of peace. It expresses deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and his assistance for their tireless efforts, which contribute to the valuable presence of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.

(Signed) Nouhad MAHMOUD
Chargé d'affaires a.i.